

REMARKS

Claims 18-21 are presented for consideration, with Claims 18 being independent.

Independent Claim 18 has been amended to further distinguish Applicants' invention from the cited art. Editorial changes have also been made to the claims.

Claims 18-21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as allegedly being obvious over Fukumoto '146 in view of Wugoski '392 and Bertram '546. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 18 of Applicants' invention relates to a function assignment method for function keys of an operation device, and includes the steps of displaying a prescribed hierarchical level menu comprising a plurality of prescribed items, selecting by a user one of the prescribed items, and displaying, on a same screen with the prescribed hierarchical level menu, a lower hierarchical level menu according to the selected item among the prescribed items, with the lower hierarchical level menu comprising a plurality of lower items. Additional steps includes selecting by a user one of the lower items, displaying, on the same screen with the prescribed and lower hierarchical level menu, a registration menu comprising registration items relating to the function keys, according to selection of one of items in the lower hierarchical level menu, and selecting by a user one of the registration items. A function is assigned according to a set of the selected items in each hierarchical level menu to the function keys relating to the selected registration item with one-to-one correspondence.

In accordance with Applicants' claimed invention, a convenient and high performance function assignment method is provided.

The primary citation to Fukumoto relates to a customized menu system design to allow a user to select an adjustable item with a small number of menu operations. The Office Action asserts that a first hierarchical level menu is displayed in Figure 5, a first item is selected by a user, and a second hierarchical level menu is displayed on the same screen as the first hierarchical level menu.

The secondary citation to Wugoski relates to a user interface system and is relied upon for presenting a user with a registration menu comprising items that relate to function keys, after the user has input a desired series of inputs to define a function.

The tertiary citation to Bertram relates to a programming structure and is relied upon for displaying hierarchical level menus in a cascading fashion with first and second hierarchical level menus being displayed on the same screen.

In contrast to Applicants' claimed invention, however, none of the art discussed above is understood to teach or suggest, among other features, selecting a lower item of a lower hierarchical level menu, and displaying a registration menu on the same screen with the prescribed and lower hierarchical level menu. As claimed, the registration menu includes registration items relating to the function keys, according to selection of one of items in the lowest hierarchical level menu. Accordingly, without conceding the propriety of combining the art in the manner proposed in the Office Action, such a combination still fails to teach or suggest Applicants' claimed invention. Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §103 is respectfully requested.

Applicants respectfully request a personal interview in this application in order to expedite prosecution. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Applicants' undersigned representative for the purpose of scheduling an interview.

Accordingly, it is submitted that Applicants' invention as set forth in independent Claim 18 is patentable over the cited art. In addition, dependent Claims 19-21 set forth additional features of Applicants' invention. Independent consideration of the dependent claims is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of this application is deemed to be in order and such action is respectfully requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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